

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please change the title to read as follows: IMAGE PROCESSING METHOD FOR SETTING AN EXTRACTION AREA, AND APPARATUS AND RECORDING MEDIUM.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 1, line 25 and ending at page 2, line 2 with the following substitute paragraph. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

A1 --For example, Fig. 29 shows an X-ray image 600 which is obtained by X-ray photographing of a cervical vertebra front part. In Fig. 29, an area 601 (black portion) shows a head part, and the other area 602 shows a throat part.--

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 2, line 3 and ending at page 2, line 18 with the following substitute paragraph. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto, is attached.

A2 --Here, when the X-ray image 600 is outputted to the film for X-ray diagnosis, first, a characteristic amount of the X-ray image 600 is extracted. In this case, in a method of extracting the characteristic amount, as shown in Fig. 30, used is a histogram of a remaining area which is obtained by deleting a passing through area (area in which X rays are directly radiated to the sensor) from the X-ray image 600. In Fig. 30, abscissa shows pixel value, and ordinate shows output frequency. Therefore, in the histogram, the pixel value (x) of a lower portion, for